

What Can You do to Help Your Claim?

1. State clearly and simply what the purpose of your claim is and what you are presently experiencing. Provide a thorough explanation of what happened in the service and when telling your story, as best you can recall the Who? What? When? And Where? Document, Document. If you have supporting documents (Names of people who were there, Orders, Travel Vouchers, or statements from people who were there and are writing on your behalf verifying your story) attach them. If you don't have them, get them.
2. If you are attempting to establish a connection for a current medical condition, provide current medical evidence of assessment.
3. Provide the name of the person, agency or company who holds relevant records.
 - a. Provide address of this person, agency or company;
 - b. Provide the approximate time frame covered by the records;
 - c. Provide the condition for which you were treated.
4. Provide current medical documentation. You may either:
 - a. Authorize the VA to obtain medical records, you can do this by completing one **Authorization and Consent to Release Information, to the Department of Veterans Affairs** for each medical provider who have records you want the VA to review. Or

b. You may obtain the records yourself and send them to the VA.

5. Tell the VA about the additional information or evidence that you want them to try to get for you.
6. Respond to all correspondence you receive from the VA as promptly as possible. If you are not sure of what they are asking, call them at (800) 827-1000 or check with the Office of Veterans Services on your island.
7. Keep the VA current with your address or phone number changes. The time duration for the process can vary greatly; the window is between eight and fourteen months – with the average of about twelve months.

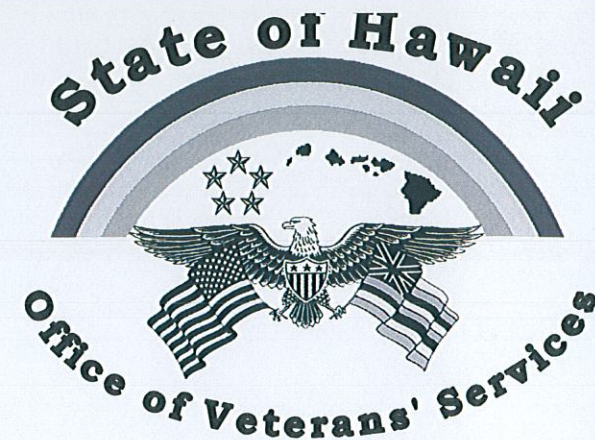


DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FORMS:

VA FORM 21-526, Veteran's Application for Compensation and/or Pension
VA FORM 21-4138, Statement in Support of Claim
VA FORM 21-4142, Authorization and Consent to Release information to the Department of Veterans Affairs

World Wide Web Links

VA Home Page <http://www.va.gov>
VA Forms <http://www.va.gov/forms>



Your Claim & The VA

OAHU

Matthew Harrell, Veterans' Counselor
John Condello, Veterans' Counselor
PH: (808) 433-0420
TTD/Relay Service: 1-711
Monday – Friday 7:30 am - 4:00 pm
www.hawaii.gov/dod/ovs

KAUAI

Tony Elliott, Veterans' Counselor
PH: (808) 241-3346
Monday – Friday 7:30 am - 4:30 pm

HAWAII (HILO)

Joseph L. Flores, Veterans' Counselor
PH: (808) 933-0315
Monday – Friday 7:30 am - 4:30 pm

MAUI, MOLOKAI AND LANAI

Tamickco Jackson, Veterans' Counselor
PH: (808) 873-3145
Monday – Friday 7:30 am - 4:30 pm

The Veterans Claims Assistance Act of 2000

This act establishes duties for the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) when you file an application for disability benefits.

Duty to Notify You About Your Claim

The VA is required to explain what information or evidence they need to grant the benefit you want. They will tell you when medical evidence is required. Medical evidence is documents like doctors' records, medical diagnoses and medical opinions.

They VA will tell you what information is necessary and or the evidence you must provide to them. The VA might request other things such as income information, the names and addresses of doctors who treated you for medical conditions. The VA will also tell you what necessary information or evidence they will try to get for you.

Duty to Assist You Obtain Evidence for Your Claim

The VA must make reasonable efforts to help you get the evidence necessary to support your claim. They can assist you with things such as medical and employment records, or records from other Federal Agencies. It is your responsibility to provide

them with enough information about the records so that they can request them from the person or agency that has them. It is however your responsibility to make sure the VA ultimately receives these records. The VA will assist you by providing a medical examination or getting medical opinion if they decided it's necessary to make a decision on your claim.



What Your Evidence Must Show to Establish Entitlement

To establish Service Connected Compensation benefits the evidence must show three things:

1. An injury sustained in military service or a disease that began in, or was made worse during military service, or an event in service causing injury or disease. The VA will retrieve your service medical records and will review them to see if they show you had or sustained an injury or disease in service. The VA will also get other military service records if necessary. *Presumptive Conditions* are

medical conditions that were first shown after service, not during service. They are specific conditions. For most of these conditions the evidence must show that a diagnosed condition within one year after separation from military service. However, for certain other medical conditions longer limits apply.

2. A current physical or mental disability. Medical evidence or other evidence showing you have persistent or recurring symptoms of disability shows this. If necessary the VA may schedule an examination to get this evidence. You may submit your own statement or statements from other people describing your physical or mental disability symptoms. The VA will review the evidence to see if it shows you have a current disability or symptoms of a disability.
3. A relationship between your current disability and an injury, disease or event in service. This is usually found in medical records or medical opinions. The VA will request this medical evidence for you if you tell them about it. If appropriate, the VA may also try to get this evidence for you by requesting a medical opinion for a VA doctor. Or, you can give them a medical opinion from your own doctor.